

Message Text

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SUBJECT: DISCUSSION TOPICS FOR WEST/CENTRAL AFRICAN CONSULAR CONFERENCE

REF: STATE 200245, STATE 171816

ACCRA CONSULAR OFFICER WOULD LIKE THE FOLLOWING TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED AT UPCOMING ABIDJAN CONSULAR CONFERENCE:

1. STUDENT VISAS: (A) QUESTION OF WHETHER PROBABLE FUTURE DEVALUATIONS OF A COUNTRY'S CURRENCY SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION CONCERNING F-1 APPLICANTS' ELIGIBILITY UNDER 12 (A) 15 -- GHANAIAN CURRENCY HAS DEVALUED 50 PERCENT IN PAST THREE MONTHS WITH ADDITIONAL DEVALUATION EXPECTED OVER NEXT YEAR; (B) QUESTION OF HOW U.S. -ORIGINATED STUDENT LOANS SHOULD BE VIEWED IN CONNECTION WITH STUDENTS WHOSE COUNTRIES' SALARY STRUCTURES AND FOREIGN EXCHANGE CONSTRAINTS WOULD FORCE THEM TO DEFAULT ON DEBTS OR REMAIN IN U.S. TO PAY OFF LOANS; (C) POSSIBILITY OF INSTITUTION OF A NATIONAL EXCHANGE VISITOR PROGRAM, WITH LIMITED PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR ALL SELECTED STUDENTS, TO PROHIBIT BRAIN DRAIN TO U.S. AND MASS CHANGES OF STATUS BY STUDENTS UNWILLING TO RETURN TO THEIR HOME COUNTRIES.-- CONSULAR OFFICER HAS RECENTLY BROACHED THIS CONCEPT TO HEAD OF I.C.A. AND INFLUENTIAL GHANAIAN EDUCATION FIGURE AND BOTH WERE RECEPITIVE TO IT.

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2. INCREASED COOPERATION WITH I.N.S. ON VISA MATTERS: EMBASSY'S IV AND NIV FUNCTIONS WOULD BENEFIT FROM INCREASED FLOW OF DATA FROM INS TO THE FIELD. COPIES OF I.N.S. DOCUMENTS AND FINDINGS CONCERNING DENIALS OF APPLICATIONS FOR CHANGE OF STATUS, REFUSALS TO APPROVE I.V. PETITIONS, AND DECISIONS ON APPLICATIONS BY STUDENTS REQUESTING AUTHORIZATION TO WORK WOULD ALL INCREASE

EMBASSY'S EFFICIENCY ON VISA MATTERS. FIRST TWO WOULD ASSIST IN COMBATTING VISA FRAUD WHILE, THIRD, IN CONNECTION WITH RECENTLY INSTITUTED SPONSOR FILE, WOULD DENY VISAS UNDER 212 (A) TO (15) STUDENTS WHOSE FAMILIES AND SPONSORS HAVE NOT BEEN SUPPORTING CLOSE RELATIVES IN THE U.S.

3. PRIVACY ACT: QUESTION OF WHETHER POSTS CAN OBTAIN GENERAL PRIVACY ACT AUTHORIZATIONS IN ADVANCE FROM AMCITS TO COMMUNICATE, WHEN NECESSARY, WITH PERSONS INTERESTED IN THEIR WELFARE AND WHEREABOUTS. SEVERAL RECENT CASES INVOLVING WORRIED RELATIVES AND EMPLOYEES IN THE U.S. WERE COMPLICATED BY FACT THAT WHILE THE EMBASSY KNEW OF THE W/W OF RESIDENT AMCITS IT COULD NOT CONTACT THEM DIRECTLY FOR AUTHORIZATION TO RESPOND TO THE INTERESTED PARTIES IN THE U.S. HOLMES

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